UNCLASSIFIED
(CLASSIFICATION)

423

RF

S/S# 7726034

Date OCT 21 1977

Copies to:
NEA
Team-D
RF:njs

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
TRANSMITTAL FORM

R

FOR: Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
National Security Council
The White House

REFERENCE:

TO: President FROM: The Rev. W. Kilmer Sites

DATE: 9/28/77 SUBJECT: USS Liberty Attack 6/8/67

WHITE HOUSE REFERRAL DATED: 10/12/77 NSC# ID DOS 771012037

_____ THE ATTACHED ITEM WAS SENT DIRECTLY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION TAKEN:

_____ A draft reply is attached

_____ A draft reply will be forwarded.

_____ A translation is attached.

__x__ An information copy of a direct reply is attached.

_____ We believe no response is necessary for the reason cited below.

_____ Other

REMARKS:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Lynn Kelley DATE 1/10/83
[illegible]
DECLASSIFIED
RELEASE [illegible]
PA or FOI [illegible]

NEA/IAI:WBSmithII:skg
10/19/77 x22686 S/S 7726034
(ZA ~~13047~~)

Cleared: NEA:NAVeliotes

Peter Tarnoff
Executive Secretary

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

October 19, 1977

The Reverend W. Kilmer Sites
Rector
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
401 Mirador Drive
Vestal, New York 13850

Dear Mr. Sites:

Your letter of September 28 to the President concerning the tragic attack of June 1967 on the USS Liberty has been referred to this office for reply.

As you know, considerable confusion surrounded the incident at the time it took place, and I can understand that survivors with whom you spoke at Norfolk afterwards expressed the belief that there had not been a case of mistaken identity on the ship. However, a United States Naval Court of Inquiry carefully investigated the incident and found that there were, in fact, grounds to conclude that the attack resulted from incorrect identification of the vessel.

Sincerely yours,

Walter B. Smith II
Director
Office of Israeli and
Arab-Israeli Affairs

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ID DOS 771012037 THE WHITE HOUSE

REFERRAL

TO: DOS DATE: DEC 12 77

REPLY DIRECT REPLY. FURNISH INFORMATION COPY

IF MORE THAN 9 DAYS DELAY IS ENCOUNTERED PLEASE TELEPHONE

MISS BYRNE 456-2718.

BASIC CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD BE RETURNED WHEN DRAFT REPLY MEMORANDUM

OR COMMENT IS REQUESTED.

REMARKS: INITIALLY REFERRED TO DOD.

X LETTER TELEGRAM DATED [illegible]

TO: PRESIDENT

FROM: W. KILMER SITES, RECTOR, ST. ANDREWS EPIS. CHURCH, 401 [illegible] DR., VESTAL, N.Y. 13850

SUBJECT: USS LIBERTY, OFF EGYPTIAN COAST, ATTACKED BY ISRAELI PLANES, WITH MUCH LOSS OF LIFE. ASKS ABOUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED.

RESPONSE:

CLOSED OUT:

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT:

PAMELA ZINN

DIRECTOR OF AGENCY LIAISON

ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
401 Mirador Drive
Vestal, New York 13850

W. Kilmer Sites, Rector

Study
785-6092
Rectory
748-9112

September 28, 1977

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear President:

On June 8, 1967 the USS Liberty on station off the coast of Egypt after six hours of Israeli surveillance was attacked and severely damaged by Israeli planes and torpedo boats with considerable loss of life. I happened to be in the Navy Yard at Norfolk, Va. after the Liberty was brought back home and talked to some of the sailors who survived the attack. Their testimony made it all but impossible to believe that the attack came about through a mistake in identity. Facts confirming this have been available but never brought to light in public.

Fair is fair, no matter whose ox is being gored. I hope you will work toward bringing the truth of this incident to light and let the chips fall where they will regardless of who gets hurt.

Sincerely,

W. Kilmer Sites

WKS:rm

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